

# My Wellsburg

Issue: Jan 26, 2022

Website

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## Community News

### My Wellsburg Newsletter

By Richard Starck

January 26, 2022, marks the launch of My Wellsburg's first email newsletter. The newsletter coupled with the new website seeks to inform the community of news, activities, and events and engage people in the revitalization efforts of Wellsburg.

West Liberty University and Bethany College have offered to support the newsletter with Communication and English majors as interns, thus creating a two-way opportunity where students can hone their writing skills while we gain reporters.

By opening two-way communication with Wellsburg residents and the surrounding community, we hope to find those with the desire to renovate our city. There will be many opportunities to express your thoughts on what Wellsburg can become. Find a team focused on your area of interest and join the fun.

### WBSA Projects



The Wellsburg Baseball & Softball Association invested \$25,000 in the Betty Carr Park from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021. The project included roof repair on the Pony Field dugout, Batting Cage installation, Turf installation, soap & towel dispensers for bathrooms, and assistance with acquiring and installation of Pickleball courts.

The Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 period will see an estimated \$15,800 of additional investments by WBSA in

## 911 not Facebook

The Chief of Police has reported that people have posted an incident on Facebook. Later, some other Facebook user read about the incident and called 911. Needless to say the delay could be crucial to first responders. Please report incidents directly to 911.

## Police moving to Middle School?

Chief of Police, Michael Allman, has been investigating the possibility of moving the Police Department from the City Building to vacant space in the Middle School building. The Brooke County School Board favors the move as the presence of police would provide better security.

The City Manager has asked for cost estimates for the move and continuing operating expenses. There are many factors to be considered such as parking, phones, and internet service. Stay tuned.

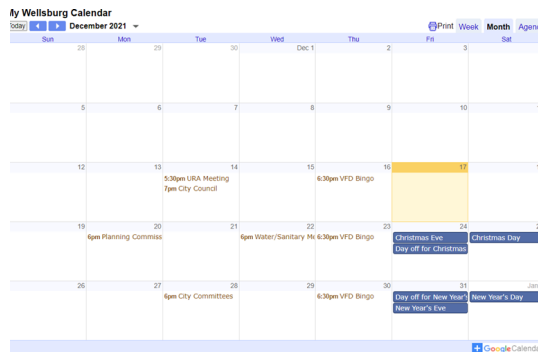
## Did you know?

There are only six places in the world named Wellsburg and all of them are in the United States.

the park. My congratulations and heartfelt thanks to the Association and it's supporting families.

When it comes time for team sponsorship or fundraisers, don't hesitate. The money comes back to the community for our enjoyment.

## Community Calendar



A great feature of the new website is the ability to publish calendar events yourself. We invite qualified community organizations to publish events directly. To qualify your organization, send us an email with a contact person and phone or email address. Please include some background information and explain why you think your events would benefit the community.

All qualification decisions are at our sole discretion. It is our policy not to accept an event from a business, individual, private club, or an anonymous source.

[Apply](#)

# Vision



## What's Your Vision?

Lifelong resident or new settler, you have ideas about how to improve Wellsburg. The new website is calling for volunteers. As parents, we need to prepare our city for the next generation. Consider your passions and strengths, then select a team to join or start one.

Go to the Vision section on the website to learn more.

[Website Vision](#)

## Business and Investments

### Business Showcase

Recognizing that a community must show its business support, we will showcase one or two local businesses in each issue.

How many times have you traveled down a city street and discovered a new business? I always announce my

### Barn with Inn



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delight in the new discovery, but I'm not going to reveal how many the times my wife advised me it'd been there for years.

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Showcase stories will answer your questions about a business's products or services and may even tell you how long it's been there. It is fun to learn Wellsburg has more to offer than you thought.

[Visit Barn with Inn](#)

All Wellsburg businesses are invited to submit an article telling the community about themselves. If your not confident in you writing skills, we will compose the article for you. Just let us know your interested.

[Showcase my Business](#)

## URA Property List Coming

The Urban Renewal Authority is the government entity formed to deal with distressed properties. Over the past several years the URA has secured grant money to acquire, rehab or demo numerous structures. It is now developing a list of properties to be offered for sale. Look for the list to appear on the new website once it has been released.

City of Wellsburg

The House on 4th Street

By Richard Starck

The loss of a home to a fire is a traumatic life event. Even if there is no loss of life or injuries, the financial damage and disruption can devastate a family. Unfortunately, the impact reaches far beyond a single-family.

The 4th Street house is a case study of the cascading issues forced on Wellsburg City and the community. Any deteriorated structure is a hazard to the neighborhood. It can attract vermin; it threatens children playing nearby, invites the homeless to seek shelter, or may serve as a focal point for drug dealers. Since the 4th Street house is not worth repairing, it's easy to say the owner should immediately have it demolished to remove the hazard. Many of Wellsburg homes were built years ago and have asbestos issues. So, the cost of abatement and demolition averages about \$15,000.

It's no surprise that the owner cannot pay for the demolition. Consequently, the burden falls on the City. Unfortunately, the 4th Street house is not an isolated case. There are numerous examples of structures in the City that need attention. Abandoned homes and buildings continue to deteriorate. Why is no action being taken?

In 2011 Wellsburg had the foresight to adopt a resolution creating the Urban Renewal Authority. The West Virginia code §16-18-5 empowers the URA to act on properties within its area of operation. The Wellsburg URA operates under the premise that its

In summary, I believe the URA has adequate authority to do its job. URA progress is impeded because of 1) inadequate funding, 2) clear procedures delineating when and what actions should be taken to renovate a property, and 3) lack of a prioritized list of distressed properties. Currently, the URA is working to produce a property list.

In future articles, I will explore various funding options.

## New Entrance to City Hall



The front entrance to City Hall is undergoing renovations. The old stairway will be replaced with new stairs and will include a handicapped accessible ramp. If you plan on visiting the building you must do so through the rear entrance.

authority is limited to slum and blighted lots or areas declared by the City of Wellsburg. So if the 4th Street house falls in a distressed neighborhood, give it to the URA to handle.

Again, a simple-sounding solution falls apart because today, the URA does not have the funds to acquire and demo the structure. Perhaps the URA can gain the needed funding when the City hires a grant writer.

If the 4th Street house is not within a slum or blighted area, the URA can not take action. So why doesn't the City declare the site blighted? Again obstacles arise because local neighbors object to being included in a blighted area. The Weirton Daily Times published an article on January 13, 2022, illustrating this point. Is it the fear of loss in property value or the fear of the URA having the authority to take property by eminent domain? Clearing distressed structures and redevelopment of an area will ultimately increase property values. Even though there are no incidents of the URA using eminent domain to acquire any property, better and continued communication among the parties will alleviate fear and help find solutions.



## Grant Writer Opportunity

City Council approved the addition of an experienced grant writer. The City Manager has interviewed two applicants. The next step is interviews by the City Council. There will be a base pay with incentives for successful grants.

## Vehicles on Park Grounds

The City Council discussed the continuing problem of vehicles driving or parking on park grounds. Erection of posts to block access is being considered. The Police Department has been notified of the problem.

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